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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1361ST MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 18 October 1994, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ANDO

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 40 OF THE COVENANT (agenda item 4) (continued)

Fourth periodic report of Tunisia (CCPR/C/84/Add.1; HRI/CORE/1/Add.46) (continued)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Ennaceur, Mr. Hetira, Mr. Kotrane, Mr. Cherif, Mr. Neji, Mr. Baati, Mr. Koubaa, Mr. Chatti and Mrs. Mrabet (Tunisia) resumed their places at the Committee table.

2. The CHAIRMAN invited the Tunisian delegation to respond to the questions on section I of the list of issues put by members of the Committee at the previous meeting.

3. Mr. ENNACEUR (Tunisia) welcomed the general satisfaction expressed by the Committee with regard to the quality, content and timely submission of the fourth periodic report (CCPR/C/84/Add.1). The Committee's recognition of the Tunisian Government's active cooperation and of the progress it was making in implementing the Covenant was also appreciated. Some critical comments had been made, but that was only to be expected since no country could claim exemption from human rights problems. Improvements were always possible and States parties to the Covenant must remain vigilant in their efforts to promote human rights. Some of the questions that had been asked had arisen because not all points had been covered in the report; he would endeavour to remedy that in his reply. Others had been prompted by information that was frequently incomplete and had been provided by sources that were not always impartial; he would endeavour to fill the gaps in that information. He appreciated the fact that all criticisms had been made in a constructive spirit and in the sole interest of promoting human rights, an aim fully shared by his Government.

4. A number of questions had been asked with respect to the status of women and discrimination against women. Tunisia was generally acknowledged to be in the forefront of the Islamic world with regard to the promotion of women's rights. Additional measures to improve the status of women had been taken recently. For instance, the former obligation on wives to obey their husbands had been abrogated on 12 July 1993 by the adoption of legislation amending article 23 of the Personal Status Code (HRI/CORE/1/Add.46, para. 76 (g)), which provided for cooperation between both spouses equally in the management of family affairs.

5. As to the questions relating to the nationality of children, the revised Nationality Code (ibid., para. 76 (h)), contained provisions whereby a child born outside Tunisia of a Tunisian mother married to a foreigner was entitled to Tunisian nationality on application; any such child born on Tunisian territory automatically acquired Tunisian nationality. A child born of a Tunisian mother and an unknown father automatically acquired Tunisian nationality, whatever the place of birth. Thus, no child born of a Tunisian mother ran the risk of statelessness.

6. Women and employment had been another topic raised. The equal status of men and women in employment was recognized by Tunisia's ratification of the ILO Conventions on Equal Remuneration, 1951 (No. 100) and Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958 (No.111). A recent amendment to the Tunisian Labour Code (ibid., para. 76 (i)) had from 5 July 1993 prohibited any discrimination between men and women in all aspects of employment.

7. A former provision of the Penal Code recognizing the fact of finding a wife in the act of committing adultery as a mitigating circumstance in her murder by her husband had been abrogated on 12 July 1993. Murder of one spouse by the other was dealt with in exactly the same way by the law, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator.

8. In granting Tunisian nationality to foreigners married to Tunisians, Tunisian law currently discriminated in favour of women. A foreign woman married to a Tunisian man could apply for Tunisian nationality after two years' residence in the country, whereas a foreign man married to a Tunisian woman could do so only after five years' residence. That area of discrimination would be drawn to the attention of the Tunisian Government; it would probably be possible to report its abolition in his country's next report.

9. An advance in the treatment of divorced women had been made by the establishment, by an Act of 5 July 1993 (ibid., para. 76 (i)), of a fund for the payment of maintenance and allowances due in the case of default by the former spouse, thus ensuring the family's subsistence.

10. There was still some discrimination against women in the area of inheritance, which arose as a result of traditional Islamic practices. However, on two points some progress had been made in Tunisia towards giving women equal inheritance rights. An only daughter whose parents died could now inherit all their property, whereas formerly she had only been able to inherit half, with the remainder going to the nearest male relatives. In cases where the grandparents survived the parents, the grandparents' property could now be divided equally between all the grandchildren, both male and female.

11. A number of questions had been asked with respect to the bodies responsible for protection of human rights in Tunisia. The Médiateur administratif (ibid., para. 100), whose functions were not exactly equivalent to those of an ombudsman, was responsible solely for mediating in disputes arising between a private citizen and the authorities. He was directly answerable to the President of the Republic, which meant that he was empowered to deal with complaints up to ministerial level. He took no part in the administration of justice or in legal proceedings and he had no responsibilities related to human rights matters, which were the province of the Higher Committee on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ibid., paras. 94-98). Nor should his duties be confused with those of the Administrative Tribunal (ibid., para. 90-93), to which any citizen was entitled to appeal against any abuse of power by the administrative authorities. In 1993, the Administrative Mediator had dealt with 12,000 disputes, 44 per cent of which had been settled in favour of the private citizen concerned.

12. The Higher Committee on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms had been established to deal with all human rights issues. The Administrative Mediator had thus merely been stating the administrative facts when he had informed Amnesty International that it should refer its cases to the Chairman of that Committee. Among its other duties, the Committee was responsible for issuing an annual report on all aspects, both positive and negative, of the human rights situation in Tunisia. In addition, it had been given the task of conducting a special investigation into all human rights abuses arising out of the events of 1992. Following its inquiry it had published a report, which contrary to some claims had contained both names and details. A copy of that document has been transmitted to the Centre for Human Rights, where it was available for consultation.

13. The difficulty in publishing the names of offenders convicted of human rights abuses was that Tunisian law prohibited the publication of the names of all convicted persons, regardless of the offence of which they had been found guilty. References to such persons in the press and elsewhere had to be by initials only. The reason for that practice was a desire to promote the rehabilitation of offenders and foster their reintegration into society. In the case of very serious and repugnant crimes, a court could however rule that the names of offenders were to be published as an additional penalty.

14. Some surprise had been expressed within the Committee that bodies looking after the rights of the ordinary citizen came under the authority of the executive. Such bodies had been made directly responsible to the President of the Republic because as Head of State he was the guarantor of the Constitution and of the proper application of the law. That gave them the requisite authority to investigate and report on the areas within their competence. They provided a very useful service which was appreciated by the ordinary citizen and by national non-governmental organizations (NGOs); it was incorrect and deplorable that they should be dismissed as mere bureaucratic institutions.

15. With regard to individual freedoms, lawyers in Tunisia were able to exercise their profession without let or hindrance. The professional associations regulating the legal and other professions in Tunisia had a long history behind them and were unlikely to be intimidated by any Government into giving up their rights. While it was true that five lawyers had recently been brought before the courts, they had been indicted for unlawful acts punishable by the law, not for practising their profession.

16. The withdrawal of political rights from persons sentenced to over three years' imprisonment was still in force in Tunisia. In practice, however, such rights could be regained after a certain period had elapsed. Legal provisions were in preparation that would provide for automatic restoration of such rights after a fixed period of time.

17. The Tunisian Human Rights League had never been suspended as some had claimed. A few years previously the Associations Act had been amended with the result that associations had been divided into several categories. The League had refused to assign itself to a category and had dissolved itself. Subsequently, a congress had been held which had elected new officers who had revised the rules of the organization to bring it into conformity with

the law. It continued to carry out prison visits and all other duties of a human rights organization; an article describing its work had appeared in the latest issue of Jeune Afrique. Dr. Marzouki had been arrested (although he had later been freed) on charges of committing an offence, not because of his former position as President of the League.

18. With regard to freedom of the press, there were more national and foreign newspapers and periodicals freely available in Tunisia than ever before. While it was true that two French newspapers, Le Monde and Libération, were still banned, that was because both had published articles disparaging Tunisia and had denied the authorities the possibility of publishing a rejoinder in their pages. The right of reply was also a fundamental right; freedom of expression should apply equally to both parties.

19. A number of members had referred to allegations made by NGOs. Tunisia recognized the important role that such bodies played in the promotion of human rights and engaged in a continuous process of dialogue with them. It regretted, however, the one-sided, partisan nature of the information disseminated by NGOs. Whenever the Government had suggested factual corrections to the material, those suggestions had not been taken up. The very same allegations received by the Committee had been brought before other human rights treaty bodies, where, after careful consideration of information from many sources, they had been judged to be unfounded. Tunisia did not claim to have reached perfection in the field of human rights: it freely admitted that much remained to be done, and counted on working with the NGOs to further such efforts. But freedom of information was not a one-way street, and opposing viewpoints must be given equitable consideration.

20. One of the areas in respect of which more work needed to be done was the first Optional Protocol. Tunisia had not been able to ratify it yet, but considered ratification a goal to work towards. On the other hand, it had made the declaration required under article 41 (1) of the Covenant, thereby accepting the possibility that complaints about human rights violations in Tunisia might be submitted to the Committee. Similarly, it had accepted the arrangements under articles 21 and 22 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which enabled torture victims to lodge complaints, and was cooperating with the Committee against Torture on some cases.

21. In conclusion, he assured members of the Committee that his Government was committed to pursuing a dialogue with them as part of its irrevocable commitment to the promotion of human rights.

22. Mrs. HIGGINS, noting the Tunisian delegation's remark that the information provided by NGOs was one-sided, said the fact that such organizations sought contacts with Governments showed they strove for a balanced outlook. The Committee often found itself in a vicious circle of allegations by NGOs and denials by Governments. Yet if Governments advanced no proofs to refute the allegations, what was the Committee to believe? In any case, it drew on a wide range of sources, including independent research by members, to ensure the objectivity of its conclusions.

23. After hearing the explanations by the Tunisian delegation, she was still at a loss to understand why the legislation prohibiting publication of the names of individuals who had been sentenced should apply to civil servants or police officers accused of specific violations of citizens' rights. Such protection of State employees was not conducive to transparency or impartiality.

24. The explanation given on why the Higher Committee of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms reported directly to the Head of State had been equally unsatisfactory. A true separation of powers was essential to ensuring fundamental freedoms; ultimately, the executive must be responsible to some authority other than itself.

25. It had been explained that the Human Rights League had dissolved itself because it had not wished to comply with new legislative requirements. However, according to her information, in March 1993 the Administrative Tribunal had decided to set aside a decision of the Minister of the Interior ordering the dissolution of the League. Was that not true? And was it correct that, under the new law, authorization was needed to establish human rights associations? In a free country where human rights were observed, why was that necessary?

26. Mr. MAVROMMATIS said that the Committee had recognized the improvements made in the area of political rights in Tunisia. Its sources were not confined to Amnesty International alone, and if the Tunisian delegation could use the current meeting to refute specific charges by any NGOs, that would be all for the better. Perhaps, for example, in the specific discussion on article 19 of the Covenant, the delegation could give more information on the reasons why the newspapers Le Monde and Libération had been banned.

27. Mrs. EVATT said additional explanations were necessary on the reports of the Higher Committee on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. As for the surprising provision that names of individuals sentenced for human rights violations could not be published, she requested information as to the specific offences involved, the kind of punishments imposed, and the law which set out the prohibition in question.

28. Mr. WENNERGREN said that in his country, too, there was a ban on publication of names of individuals sentenced, but that ban applied only to publication by newspapers. In the instant case, the organ involved was a human rights body whose investigations were intended precisely for the purpose of informing the public. Why, then, should the prohibition apply to such a body?

29. Mr. AGUILAR URBINA noted that the Tunisian delegation had described Amnesty International's sources as one-sided, yet that same NGO was cited frequently in the Tunisian report. As Mrs. Higgins had pointed out, there was a vicious circle of allegations and refutations. If no response was given to requests by NGOs for information on specific prosecutions and punishments, the resulting uncertainty was a cause for concern.

30. There had still been no satisfactory explanation as to why the body created for human rights protection was not independent, but answered to the Head of State, and why the names of State agents responsible for human rights violations could not be published.

31. Mr. ENNACEUR (Tunisia) said he had never singled out a specific NGO for criticism - he had simply said that information from such sources was often incomplete. It was not true that the Government had refused to provide information: rather, no account had been taken of the information it had furnished, and allegations had been formulated despite the Government's refutations. Those same allegations had been considered and deemed to be unfounded by other human rights bodies, notably the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

32. Turning to the prohibition of publication of names of sentenced individuals, he re-emphasized that that measure was intended to facilitate the reintegration of the individual into society. Whether publication was in a newspaper or in a report made available to the public, the effect was the same; hence, the prohibition applied to any publication of the names of individuals sentenced. The specific pieces of legislation in which the prohibition was set out were article 5 of the Penal Code, which established a range of principal and supplementary penalties, and the Press Code. He had not expected such emphasis to be laid on the measure in question, and was not equipped to provide the names of the individuals affected by it.

33. The CHAIRMAN invited the delegation of Tunisia to respond to the questions raised in section II of the list of issues, which read:

"II. Right to life, treatment of prisoners and other detainees, liberty and security of the person and right to a fair trial (arts. 6, 7, 9, 10 and 14)

(a) Has the death penalty been imposed and carried out since the submission of the report and for what crimes? Have any measures been taken to implement the recommendations of the review Commission on criminal legislation, referred to during the discussion of the third periodic report, aiming at the reducing of the number of offences currently punishable by the death penalty? (See para. 19 of document CCPR/C/SR.991 and paras. 77 to 83 of the report)

(b) With reference to paragraphs 92 to 99 of the report, please comment on measures contemplated to prevent the recurrence of acts of torture or mistreatment of persons deprived of their liberty. How have the authorities dealt with allegations of such treatment?

(c) Please provide information on the practical implementation of the maximum 10 day period of pre-trial detention and the right to a medical examination of persons deprived of their liberty set up in Act. No. 87-70 referred to in paragraphs 109 and 110 of the report.

(d) Please provide information on provisions relating to incommunicado detention.

(e) Has any legislation been envisaged to allow the possibility of appeal against the judgements of military courts, particularly in view of the fact that the jurisdiction of those courts may extend to civilians? Is there any recourse available to those who believe that their rights under the covenant have been violated by a judgement of a military court? (See paras. 161 and 163 of the report)."

34. Mr. ENNACEUR (Tunisia) said that, although the country had undergone a difficult period in late 1991 and 1992, the President had not proclaimed a state of emergency, an option provided for in article 46 of the Constitution. All allegations of abuses had been investigated, and the results published in a report transmitted to the Centre for Human Rights. Judicial and administrative measures had been taken against those responsible for such excesses.

35. The maximum duration of pre-trial detention had now been reduced to 10 days. He quoted paragraph 110 of the report describing the procedures to be followed by judicial police officers in preparing reports. During or on the expiry of the period of custody, the person detained or a member of his family or his lawyer could request a medical examination. It was proposed to amend the Code of Penal Procedure to incorporate an additional guarantee concerning custody, namely the obligation immediately and automatically to inform the family of any person who was taken into custody. Incommunicado detention did not exist in Tunisia.

36. Statistics on executions in the past few years were supplied in paragraph 84 of the report. It should be noted that the death sentence was applied only in exceptional cases. To his knowledge, no change had occurred in the list of crimes punishable by the death penalty since the Committee's consideration of Tunisia's third periodic report (CCPR/C/52/Add.5).

37. Replying to question (b), he said that all allegations of mistreatment were systematically investigated and, in cases where abuses of authority had been confirmed, those responsible had been duly punished. With regard to question (c), he reiterated the information contained in paragraphs 109 and 110 of the report, adding that the medical examination referred to in the last sentence of paragraph 110 could be requested not only by the detainee himself but also by his family or lawyer. As already stated, the question of making it compulsory to provide immediate information to families of detained persons was currently under consideration. Concerning question (d), he said that, as already stated, incommunicado detention did not exist in Tunisia. Lastly, replying to question (e), he said that military courts, which were not emergency courts, had competence to try civilians in cases such as those which had occurred in 1992, where civilians had been implicated together with military personnel. As to recourse against a judgement of a military court, he said that an appeal could be lodged with the Court of Cassation and that it was also possible to apply for judicial review against decisions of the Indictment Division.

38. The CHAIRMAN invited members of the Committee to address additional oral questions to the Tunisian delegation.

39. Mrs. HIGGINS, referring to paragraphs 161-163 of the report, said that she was still concerned about civilians being tried by military courts. With regard to the question of appeal against the judgements of military courts, she drew a distinction between an application for judicial review, which was normally concerned with the fairness of the trial, and an appeal for review of the sentence within the meaning of article 14 (5) of the Covenant. Further elucidation of the recourse available to individuals sentenced by military courts would be welcome.

40. Mr. WENNERGREN said that a distinction should also be drawn between the duty of courts to make public the names of all detained individuals and the right of the press to divulge those names. It was true that some restrictions were placed upon that right in Sweden, but that did not mean that Swedish courts were entitled under any circumstances to withhold the names of persons brought before them. He would appreciate further information about the way in which those matters were dealt with in Tunisia. Secondly, referring to information supplied by Amnesty International, he said that in a number of cases persons had allegedly been sentenced for various offences on the strength of confessions extorted under torture. It would appear that in those cases the courts had paid no attention to the accused persons' allegations of torture and had sentenced them in the absence of a confession given before the court. He requested further information on that score.

41. Mr. AGUILAR URBINA associated himself with the remarks made by the previous speaker. According to Amnesty International, many allegations of serious mistreatment or torture were not investigated at all and no independent inquiry was conducted into cases of death occurring in custody. Families were not informed how the person had died but simply told to bury the body as quickly as possible. In one case, a detainee under interrogation had reportedly died after throwing himself from a third-floor window. The nature of such an interrogation was surely suspect. As for the duty of courts to publish the names of persons brought before them, he remarked that, while it was undoubtedly important to protect the interests of persons seeking to be reintegrated in society, it was at least equally important to protect the security of persons detained in custody.

42. Mrs. EVATT said that the Tunisian delegation's assertion that all allegations of torture were duly investigated was at variance with information available to Committee members from other sources. While commending the Tunisian Government for its efforts to date, she felt that much more needed to be done at all levels to prevent torture and deaths in custody. As an example of failure to enforce the 10-day rule, she cited the case of a student leader allegedly arrested on 11 July 1991 whose detention had been announced by the Minister of the Interior at a press conference on 22 May but whose official date of detention according to police records was 11 July - almost two months later. In another case where a detainee had been tortured so badly as to be unable to walk unaided into the courtroom for the hearing of his appeal, the judge had nevertheless failed to order an investigation of his allegation of mistreatment. Those were only two cases out of many, and much stricter enforcement was obviously needed, especially if witnesses of police abuses -

in other words, fellow detainees - were to be encouraged to come forward. The two specific questions she wished to address to the Tunisian delegation were the following: (a) Was torture itself a criminal offence? and (b) Were confessions obtained under torture automatically excluded from the evidence?

43. Mr. BRUNI CELLI, noting with appreciation that the Tunisian Government was studying the possibility of becoming a party to the First Optional Protocol, expressed the hope that it would also consider acceding to the Second Optional Protocol aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. The large number of capital offences in Tunisia was a matter for concern. There was nothing in paragraphs 77-88 of the report to indicate a systematic policy of investigating complaints of violations of the right to life. According to information supplied by Amnesty International, there were at least five specific cases in which persons not under sentence of death had died at the hands of agents of the State without an autopsy being carried out and without the families being given any precise information about the cause of death. He requested the Tunisian delegation to comment on those cases and to provide further information on the situation with regard to the right to life in Tunisian prisons.

44. Mr. EL SHAFEI, associating himself with Mrs. Higgins' remarks, requested amplification of the statement in paragraph 163 of the report to the effect that there was no possibility of appeal against judgements of the military courts.

45. Mr. MAVROMMATIS, referring to information supplied by the United States Department of State concerning cases of mistreatment of detainees, particularly Islamists and extreme leftists, and of confessions extracted by torture from such persons, asked whether the Tunisian delegation could cite any case where such allegations had been accepted by the court and indicate what action had been taken. A further matter for concern were the cases reported by Amnesty International of women relatives of fundamentalists or communists being sexually harassed and tortured. Yet another problem, already mentioned by earlier speakers, was the practice of keeping persons under detention for some time without entering that fact in the police records. The Tunisian Government had, without doubt, taken some steps to deal with those problems, but it should go still further by making it absolutely imperative for the names of detained persons to be published and for their families to be informed of their place of detention. In his view, it would be in the best interests of Tunisia to answer all the points raised in the Department of State report.

46. Mr. DIMITRIJEVIC said that he shared many of the concerns expressed by previous speakers, particularly with regard to the legal definition of torture under Tunisian law and the rules of evidence applied to confessions obtained through torture. He was also disturbed by the many reports from NGOs of cases in which the police had used their powers of arrest to harass individuals and had falsified details of the duration of detention to preserve a semblance of legality, and would like to know whether effective measures had been taken to improve police discipline and curb such abuses.

47. With regard to the independence of the legal profession, he noted that in some countries lawyers representing persons accused of political offences were often regarded with suspicion by the authorities and sometimes suffered discrimination. Were defence lawyers in Tunisia protected from such pressure?

48. Mr. BAN observed that the purpose of the Committee's questions was to assist the Tunisian authorities in improving a generally good human rights record which had to be viewed against a background of many positive social developments such as the increased life expectancy and reduced infant mortality reflected in the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.46).

49. With regard to the application of capital punishment, he noted the large number of offences carrying the death penalty. He felt that Tunisian law was unnecessarily severe in providing for the death penalty for crimes such as treason in time of peace or violence committed in court against magistrates.

50. Concerning the reported deaths of detainees in suspicious circumstances, he wished to know whether an autopsy was mandatory in such cases. Such a provision was essential in a country ruled by law, but it did not appear to exist in Tunisia.

51. Referring, lastly, to the provisions described in paragraphs 114-116 of the report aimed at reducing the duration of detention, he inquired whether the legislation in question had been enacted or was still pending.

52. Mr. ENNACEUR (Tunisia) said that his Government welcomed the opportunity of constructive dialogue with the Committee and would give very careful consideration to the views expressed by its members.

53. With regard to questions raised concerning the independence of the judiciary, the role of military courts and possibilities of appeal, he emphasized that the judicial system in Tunisia was independent in law and in fact and not subject to pressures from the executive. Only members of the Public Prosecutor's Office were subordinate to the Ministry of Justice; other members of the judiciary were independent. Magistrates had their own association which had considerable power and vigorously defended its own independence. Lawyers could practise their profession freely and enjoyed total independence, with their own professional association which placed great importance on human rights. The provisions of the Covenant could be, and frequently were, invoked by lawyers during trials, a fact which had been noted by the International Federation of Human Rights in its reports. Many members of the legal profession were also actively involved in various political and civil liberties organizations. The independence of the judiciary was attested by the fact that none of the individuals tried in 1992 for attempting to overthrow the Government had been sentenced to death, although the Public Prosecutor had called for the death penalty, and the sentences actually passed in those trials were regarded by many observers as far more lenient than had been expected in view of the gravity of the offences.

54. The right of appeal was recognized in law and in practice. In both military and civil courts, appeals could be lodged both at the preparatory stage and after sentence had been passed, in keeping with French legal practice on which the Tunisian system was largely based.

55. Replying to questions concerning torture, he confirmed that torture was a punishable offence under articles 218 and 219 of the Penal Code. Any State official found guilty of violating the physical integrity of a detainee was liable to a minimum of five years' imprisonment. Confessions obtained through the use of torture were not recognized by the courts.

56. With regard to the death of detainees under suspicious circumstances, he said that an autopsy was mandatory in all such cases and that in some instances, where doubts had existed concerning the results of the initial investigation, further autopsies had been performed by forensic experts from abroad. Any official found to be responsible for the death of a person in custody was prosecuted and punished in accordance with the law. A judicial inquiry and autopsy were mandatory in all cases of homicide, and the findings of such an inquiry could be challenged and a second inquiry conducted when that was deemed to be necessary. The Government of Tunisia was fully committed to applying the provisions of the Covenant in a consistent and effective way so as to prevent violations. He noted that there had been no allegations of systematic torture in the Department of State report and that no moves had been made under article 41 of the Covenant to present any communication to that effect, although Tunisia had declared that it recognized the competence of the Committee for that purpose. Allegations of systematic human rights violations submitted to other human rights bodies had not been upheld.

57. Referring to questions concerning time-limits for detention, he said that the maximum period of preventive detention had been reduced to six months, but could be extended to a maximum of 14 months in the case of a crime and 9 months in the case of an offence.

58. Replying to the question concerning the publication of court rulings and the names of offenders, he said that court decisions were freely available, and court hearings were held in public and attended by the press. The practice of divulging only offenders' initials, not their full names, was in common with the procedure in certain other countries.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.